



File Code: 3420
Route To:

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Subject: Potential FY 2008 Forest Health Projects, Cuba RD

To: Forest Supervisor, Santa Fe National Forest

On August 27, Dave Conklin of our staff met with Andy Vigil (SFNF Westside silviculturist) to examine potential FY 2008 Forest Health project areas in the Chaparral WUI on the Cuba District. They also looked at some ongoing (FY 2007) work in this area.

A 67 acre unit located on both sides FR 539, about 3 miles south of the Girl Scout Camp, appears to be an excellent candidate for a bark beetle prevention project. This is a nearly pure ponderosa pine stand, mostly pole and small-sawtimber size, but with a significant component of larger, somewhat older trees in some portions. Basal areas generally range from 100 to 150 ft² per acre. The last thinning here appears to have been about 30 years ago.

We agreed that a leave-tree mark prior to thinning here would help insure better overall results. Spacing should be irregular and favor the best-formed dominant and co-dominant trees. Excess trees up to 12" dbh, the diameter limit for the Chaparral WUI, would be removed, retaining basal areas of 50 to 80 ft². Much of this area should be accessible for public firewood collecting.

The other potential FY 2008 project area, known as McMillin, was originally included as part of a stewardship contract a few years ago, but was never treated. This entire unit is 167 acres, and encloses a pair of 10-hectare research plots. The forest here is mostly ponderosa pine, but includes a significant component of young Douglas-fir and white fir in many portions. The eastern side includes several aspen clones. Ponderosa pine dwarf mistletoe is fairly extensive in the western portion of the unit, and generally light and scattered elsewhere. Site quality ranges from low-moderate to good. Basal areas are similar to those in the previous unit. Without treatment, this area will clearly tend to convert toward mixed-conifer type.

We agreed to defer some of the northwestern part the unit (20 to 30 acres), a ridge-top where site quality is relatively low and mistletoe severe. The remainder of the area (around 140 acres) would be a good candidate for mistletoe reduction and bark beetle prevention treatment. Some of this area was previously leave-tree marked, but other portions were not marked. Although the existing mark will assist implementation, either some additional marking or a clear "designation by description" prescription will be needed. We recommend retaining some of the better lightly-infected (DMR 1 & 2) trees to maintain the pine component in areas with extensive mistletoe infestation. Treatment here would also be dictated by the 12" diameter (cut tree) limit.



It is anticipated that the unit along FR 539 would be implemented by force account, while the McMillin area would be contract-thinned (possibly using machine mastication). Ongoing force account thinning has progressed well in the FY 2007 project area along FR 534 in Bales Canyon (Figure). Portions of this unit are accessible for public firewood gathering.



FY 2007 project area in Bales Canyon

Please contact Dave Conklin at (505) 842-3288 if you have questions about this evaluation.

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